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Emergency Plan of Action operation update

Cuba: Drought

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF Operation Update No. 1	MDRCU003
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Operation start date: 27 May 2016	Expected timeframe: 6 months (operation will be extended by 3 additional months); the end date is now 2 December 2016
Overall operation budget: 194,508 Swiss francs (CHF)	
Number of people affected: 500,000 people	Number of people to be assisted: 10,000 people (2,000 Families)
Host National Society presence (no. of volunteers, staff and branches): 1 National Headquarters, approximately 1,000 staff members, 45,000 volunteers, and 15 provincial and 168 municipal branches.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the Operation: Norwegian Red Cross	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the Operation: Cuban Government agencies: Ministry of Civil Defence, National Water Resource Institute, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment	

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Summary

Summary of changes made to the emergency plan of action: *Revisions have been made to the emergency plan of action (EPoA) for this DREF operation. The Cuban Red Cross (CRC) continues to have difficulties accessing drinking water in the province of Santiago, and the risk is increasing because the levels in the dam and the tributaries continue to decrease. Moreover, the lack of safe water remains a concern for health authorities due to the hazards associated with sporadic availability. Currently, the "supply cycles" are belated and the communities have to wait for more than 20 days to receive the water supplied by the government through pipes. The Civil Defense in the province of Santiago de Cuba has established a working group for coordination in which the Cuban Red Cross participates, thereby promoting its institutional image.*

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion: *This sector continues to be a high priority; however, given the emerging needs and the time that has elapsed since the initial start of the operation, there is no longer a requirement for the provision of hygiene kits to the affected families.*

Timeframe of the operation: *The Cuban Red Society requested a three-month extension to complete activities.*

Achievements to date:

The regulations established in the country for the importation of resources is one of the challenges that the National Society has faced during the operation. Ongoing discussions with the government have led to the definition of the importer, EMED-Santiago de Cuba, for all of the goods that enter Santiago de Cuba. Likewise, MEDICUBA/Cuban Red Cross is responsible for the goods entering through the port of Mariel, and it began doing the necessary paperwork for the resource importation permits for the required documents established in the importation of donated goods into Cuba.

Monitoring meetings with the coordination working group for the drought in the province of Santiago de Cuba were held, where the group defined the communities. It worked in coordination with the formal leaders of these communities, established the criteria for the selection of beneficiaries and planned the project's community meetings.

The National Society does not have space for the reception of goods; however, it has access to secure State

storehouses at no cost. Santiago de Cuba authorities are determining how the goods are stored according to the size of the loads.

The National Society established ties with the National Department for Health Promotion and Santiago de Cuba's Provincial Ministry of Public Health for the development of educational material to use in hygiene promotion.

The National Society selected volunteers to act as facilitators for the community hygiene promotion workshop that will be held from 29 August to 2 September 2016; it also developed the Disasters Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation's baselines.

The Cuban Red Cross identified personnel that specialize in the collection of operational documentation and the development of beneficiary stories.

On 2 June 2016, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) allocated 194,508 Swiss francs from the DREF to the Cuban Red Cross to support the delivery of assistance to 10,000 people (2,000 families). The operation was initially expected to be implemented over a three-month period and be completed by 2 September 2016. Through this DREF operations update, the National Society reports progress and delays for the activities proposed under water and sanitation.

The National Society has held relevant meetings to coordinate actions that require permits from the Cuban government, such as coordination with the Department of Health Education, Ministry of Public Health to produce prevention materials and disseminate information, the development of key awareness messages, advocacy and self-care for the population, the establishment of mechanisms for reporting and the holding of weekly coordination meetings with Civil Defense and other government agencies involved in decision making. Moreover, the government has already authorized the National Society to import water tanks.

A. Situation Analysis

Description of the Disaster

A long uninterrupted drought combined with heavy unseasonable rains attributed to the El Niño phenomenon, climate change and the increase in earthquakes over the past two months augur difficult times for Cuba. In recent years, rainfall patterns during both the dry and rainy seasons have failed to reach normal historical values, which has caused diminished groundwater resources and the drying up of the rivers and dams on which the population relies for its water supply.

Cuba is now suffering from the effects of climate change, especially rising temperatures and the scourge of a severe drought, which is considered the worst in the last 115 years. It is well known that a hydrological year with an annual rainfall average below 78 per cent, will generate conditions that lead to this threat emerging and continuing the next year; the low levels of accumulated rainfall for more than 12 months in the country has caused country reservoirs to drop 38 percent below their capacity, 98 are below 25 per cent and 26 are completely dry.

National Water Resource Institute (INRH) authorities reported that the situation is becoming more complex and critical due to the extended dry period and the continued decrease in the dam levels. The drier groundwater basins are located in the eastern regions, especially in the province of Santiago de Cuba, which has a population of 1,057,404 inhabitants, 71 per cent of them in urban areas and 28.9 in rural areas. With less than 30 per cent of water capacity in reservoirs and rainfall dropping below historical averages, this region is currently facing one of the most severe droughts in both the province's and the country's history.

The province of Santiago de Cuba has 9 municipalities, 4 of which are the most affected: Santiago de Cuba, Palma Soriano, Ill Frente and Guamá; the drought has impacted approximately 520,560 people (94,000 families), affecting people in the urban areas most severely.

May is considered the rainiest month in Cuba (start of the rainy season), but rainfall in the country has been reduced by climate variability, particularly in Santiago de Cuba. The beginning of the May to October rainy season is being affected by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation event that has persisted in the equatorial Pacific Ocean since early 2015, reaching its height in November of that same year. Currently, most models predict a transition towards a neutral phase during the northern hemisphere's spring, with an increased chance of La Niña occurring during the second half of 2016. Usually when a strong El Niño event declines in the equatorial Pacific, rains in the Cuban territory during the onset of the rainy season tend to be below average, primarily during the May to July quarter; however, it must be noted that not all El Niños behave in a similar manner, as these in turn are influenced by other oceanic-atmospheric circulation patterns.

The government has been providing water through water trucking; however, the extended drought has stretched its capacity to the point that a relief intervention is needed. In this regard, the communities' greatest need, as identified by government authorities, is containers to store water and meet household needs. The provision of 1,500-litre tanks to increase water storage capacity has been identified as a priority, and other actions include the provision of 200-litre tanks and 10-litre buckets to families to store drinking water.

El Niño forecasts for 2016

The El Niño forecasts for 2016 remain unchanged for the DREF EPoA issued on 2 June 2016. For further information, see the [DREF EPoA](#).

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

In the area of intervention (at the provincial level), the CRC has one provincial headquarters (in the city of Santiago) and nine municipal branches with a staff of 32 people, as well as one 5-ton truck, 2 4-wheel drive vehicles and 1 motorcycle. In terms of storage, CRC has access to government warehouses, which are free of charge to use and have security, in the province of Santiago in case of an emergency.

As of December 2015, the province reportedly had 4,087 active volunteers, who were trained to conduct activities including first aid, operations and relief, restoration of family links, youth section, psychological support and water and sanitation.

The CRC's branch in Santiago has been actively participating in the planning and implementation of several community-level projects financed by the Norwegian Red Cross (called PRECOS, which stands for "Preparing Communities"). The provincial branch was also actively involved during the hurricane Sandy response in 2012; with funding from the Norwegian Red Cross, ECHO and the IFRC; it conducted humanitarian aid distribution and shelter activities, as well as training in participatory methodologies such as safe roofs and water and sanitation.

The CRC in Santiago is currently working and coordinating preparedness and response activities for droughts and earthquakes with Civil Defence and the fire department.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conduct activities with the CRC on a regular basis; however, neither of them has physical presence in the country. The collaboration between the organizations normally involves specific activities such as the development and financing of the ICRC's HELP (health in emergencies in large populations) course.

The Norwegian Red Cross has been present in Cuba since 2008, funding and technically supporting the Cuban Red Cross on a project called PRECO (**PRE**paring **CO**mmunities), which is currently in its fifth phase. During this time, there has been a permanent Norwegian Red Cross delegate in-country, making it the only National Society physically present in Cuba.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Civil Defence in the province of Santiago has a key role in the actions being conducted, and it has taken the drought threat very seriously.

Top government authorities are conducting coordination meetings in order to review the ongoing activities; the meetings take place every Saturday at 6 am to discuss unresolved problems and to make the appropriate decisions about how to better support the drought-affected population. Additionally, the government has been providing water trucking to the affected communities.

At the population level, information flow with community representatives has been effective, as most of the population is aware of both the problem and the mitigation actions being proposed. Despite the difficult situation, discontent has not been detected during the visits.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection and risk assessment and scenario planning

Needs were identified during the initial and detailed assessments of the emergency and remain relatively consistent with the emerging situation.

August is the month that has the least amount of rain during the rainy season due to effects from the Atlantic anti-cyclone; however, showers and thunderstorms associated with the passage of tropical systems, such as tropical waves and low area and daytime heating, occur in the afternoon and early evening hours. August also marks the beginning of the increase in cyclonic activity over Cuba, although the frequency of hurricanes in this month is only half that of September.

The expected rainfall totals for August 2016, which are based on the Climate Centre's predictive models¹, are below:

Region	Predicted value in millimeters.	Decile	Estimated Probability rainfall in millimeters	
			Up to 50%	Up to 70%
West	190	7	180 - 220	170 - 240
Center	160	5	140 - 180	130 - 190
East	115	5	105 - 130	100 - 140

Normally, August is one of the hottest months of the year; in addition, it has been warmer over the last ten years than in previous decades, and very warm temperatures are expected in the current month.

Extreme temperature values planned for August 2016:

Region	Estimated temperature Peak region most likely than 50%		Estimated minimum temperature more likely than 50%	
	Value in ° C.	Anomaly in ° C.	Value in ° C.	Anomaly in ° C.
West	32.0 - 33.0	0.5	24.5 - 23.8	0.9
Center	32.3 - 33.3	0.5	23.5 - 22.9	1.0
East	32.4 - 33.0	0.5	26.4 - 25.7	1.0

Consequently, the seasonal reduction in rainfall and the warmer than average temperatures in August threaten to exacerbate further already severe drought conditions.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

Respond to the immediate needs of 2,000 families in the province of Santiago that have been affected by the prolonged drought.

Operational Support Services

Support services include Human Resources, Communications, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Administration and Finance. Please see the EPoA issued on 2 June 2016 for more details.

Logistics and supply chain

The Logistics and supply chain generally remains the same; however, some changes were made to the location for the receipt of the 2,000- 250 litre tanks with lids and the 6,000 plastic buckets with lids. Previously, these items were supposed to be received in Havana; however, since the government is providing transportation and warehousing, the storage of these items in Santiago de Cuba, where there are storage facilities, has been requested instead.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

¹ Source: Institute of Meteorology of the Republic of Cuba (INSMET) – Climate Forecast. 19 July 2016.

Outcome 1: Contribute to improved access, storage and management of water for 2,000 families (10,000 people) in selected communities and schools in nine municipalities in the province of Santiago	Outputs	% of achievement
	Output 1.1 Distribution of 10-litre buckets for water storage to 2,000 families (3 buckets per family)	50%
	Output 1.2 Distribution of materials to treat and control the quality of water	50%
	Output 1.3 Establishment of nine community groups (one per municipality) to monitor water quality	0%
	Output 1.4 Hygiene promotion activities are implemented in selected communities and schools	0%

Activities	Is implementation on time?		% progress (estimate)
	Yes (x)	No (x)	
Purchase of 6,000 plastic 10-litre buckets		X	50%
Identification and deployment of a General Regional Intervention Team (RIT) (revised activity)		X	50%
Purchase of 5M aquatab tablets with a 10 litre-capacity		X	50%
Purchase of 350 pool testers to measure chlorine		X	50%
Purchase of DPD3 (35,000) and DPD1 (35,000) tablets		X	50%
Distribution of buckets, aquatabs and pool testers		X	0%
Establishment of agreements with communities for community activities		X	0%
Distribution of 2,000 250-litre tanks with lids		X	0%
Distribution of 1,000-litre tanks for MINSAP facilities		X	0%
Purchase of 4,000 long-lasting insecticide treated [mosquito nets] (LLITNs) (2 per family)		X	50%
Printing of educational material		X	10%
Purchase of 500,000 plastic 10-litre trash bags		X	50%
Establishment of community monitoring committees		X	0%

Progress towards outcomes

Progress has been made against all of the activities and in line with the DREF work since the moment the CRC received the government's approval to begin the implementation; the remaining activities will be conducted during the three-month extension.

The National Society delivered water tanks, LLITNs and 10-litre plastic buckets to the city of Santiago de Cuba and the affected population in the urban communities in Abel Santamaría, Micro 8 and Hayde Santamaría, because it takes between 10 to 20 days for these communities' water pipes to resupply them with water, which is the longest resupply cycle in the area. Moreover, training in hygiene promotion will also be conducted in these communities due to the high concentration of multi-family apartment buildings (the majority of which are 5 stories); in addition to the high density of multi-family apartment buildings, there is also a lack of cisterns and elevated tanks with sufficient capacity to prolong the supply periods.

The National Society consulted with the coordination work group for the drought in the province of Santiago de Cuba during its weekly meetings; government and institutional representatives and community leaders also participated in the meetings.

Quality programming / Areas common to all sectors

Outcome 2 Continuous and detailed assessment and analysis is used to inform the design and	Outputs	% of achievement
	Output 1.1 The management of the operation is informed by a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system	30%

implementation of the operation	Output 1.2 Operation activities are disseminated at the local, national and regional levels	Is implementation on time?		0%
Activities		Yes (x)	No (x)	% progress (estimate)
Hiring of operational staff and staff to support the operation in the field		X		100%
Community assemblies to present the project			X	0%
Monitoring visits by CRC's central headquarters		X		50%
Progress reports on affected communities			X	10%
Documentary on activities			X	0%
Beneficiary satisfaction survey			X	0%
Evaluation of lessons learned			X	0%
Development of beneficiary stories			X	0%
Monitoring visits by IFRC			X	0%
Progress towards outcomes				
<p>The selection of volunteers from the Red Cross branch in Santiago de Cuba to support the field operations has been completed.</p> <p>The remaining activities will be conducted during the three-month extension period.</p>				

Contact Information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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